

NEPA Supports Powerful Decisions for Managing Deer-Aircraft Strike Hazards at Ellsworth AFB

Background

Ellsworth AFB applied the integrated planning approach incorporated into NEPA compliance to the threat to the mission caused by deer residing within the flightline and on the runway. After 5 years (1991-1996) of discussions on the extent of threat to the mission (a B-1B hit a deer in 1991, causing aircraft damage) and effectiveness of various solutions, the integrated planning process (NEPA) was formally initiated in Sep 96.

The planning strategy involved a partnership between the installation NEPA Coordinator and a consultant experienced in NEPA compliance, integrated planning, collaborative problem-solving, and wildlife management, facilitating a cross-functional team made up of civilian and military Ellsworth AFB personnel. The Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed and the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) signed by the Wing Commander in Dec 96, at a contractor cost of less than \$11,000.

Planning Strategies Overcame Inefficiencies

The strategy for the Environmental Assessment (EA) managed the inefficiencies inherent and often obstructive in any major decision making process by:

- Ensuring that the right people were involved and working together effectively at the right times.
- Focusing the planning team on underlying problem identification, resolution, and analysis.
- Conducting frequent team document reviews and corrections during the progression of the analysis.
- Basing the analysis on facts supported by the scientific literature and national experts.
- Keeping management informed and involved throughout the planning process.
- Conducting the analysis directly through subject matter experts in 28 BW/SEF, 28 OSS/OSA, and 28 CES/CEV, rather than reviewing and correcting the work of others.



Team Ellsworth Award

Ms. Judith Lee

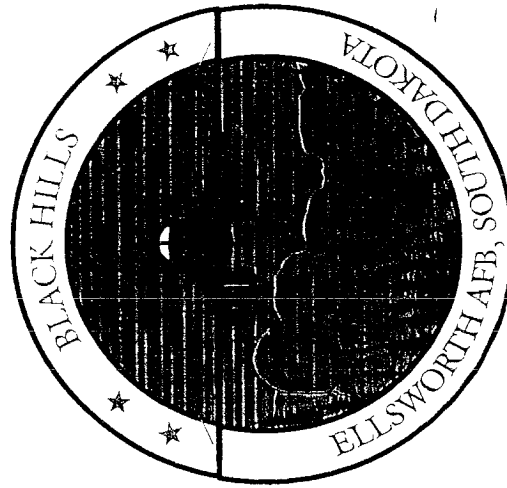
For Outstanding Performance as a Valued Member of the

Deer Airstrike Hazard Team



LERoy BARNIDGE, JR.
Colonel, USAF
Commander, 28th Bomb Wing.

12 February 1997



Together Everyone Achieves More

CQ

401

CQ401



CASE STUDY SUMMARY – CEQ NEPA TASK FORCE

CATEGORY: Effective Integration of an Environmental Management System (EMS) with NEPA and Programmatic/Site Specific Planning and Decisionmaking

PROJECT: Building and Pavement Demolition and Real Property Excess/Surplus Actions, Ellsworth Air Force Base (EAFB), South Dakota Programmatic/Site Specific Environmental Assessment

PRACTICE:

- 1) Within the legal framework, development of a complete EMS for demolition and excess/surplus of military real property on EAFB, identifying all consecutive and concurrent steps, requirements for compliance with environmental, safety, health, and other Federal and state laws, and evaluation of environmental effects, providing a complete decision and implementation package for these actions;
- 2) Use of agency expertise on the Interdisciplinary Team to ensure practicality, effectiveness, cooperation, and long-term commitment to implementation of the EMS, using the Facilitated Approach;
- 3) Providing analysis for specific demolition and excess/surplus actions that, with application of the appropriate EMS and associated mitigation measures, would not require additional NEPA compliance (site specific decisions). The EA also provided EMS processes and mitigation measures for future, as yet undefined demolition and excess/surplus actions that, if consistent with the EA, could then be categorically excluded (programmatic decisions);
- 4) Use of the FONSI as a commitment and checklist for each organization to ensure implementation of the EMSs, with mitigation measures;
- 5) Use of the facilitated NEPA process to leverage the agency expertise, and to reach closure on and commitment to the issues, EMSs, mitigation, and implementation in a short period of time.

AGENCY: U. S. Air Force, Ellsworth Air Force Base, South Dakota

INVOLVED PARTIES: Representatives from 17 Base organizations, and two bat experts from state and private agencies

AGENCY CONTACT: Cheryl Cordray, 28CES/CERR, 2103 Scott Drive, Ellsworth AFB, SD 57707. Phone: 605-385-4804

DATES: NEPA process began 1997, FONSI signed November 1998

Context/Background and Project Description: Because of mission changes and personnel reductions, Ellsworth AFB had many structures and associated pavement to demolish, and military housing and other former mission-related real property to excess/surplus. AF policy and Federal law provided the framework for disposal of real property. 51 structures and 32 pieces of pavement had already been demolished, with individual NEPA documents. An additional four sites had NEPA compliance for excess/surplus. The EAFB 10-year plan identified an additional 23 structures and 6 pieces of pavement for demolition, and 3 military housing areas and two mission-related facilities to excess/surplus. With further changes in mission, more demolition and excess/surplus actions would occur in the future, and clear action processes and streamlined NEPA processes were needed for efficient and complete actions for the identified and unidentified future demolition and surplus/excess actions. Using the expertise of the various base organizations who were involved or should have been involved to identify the necessary consecutive and concurrent process components, mitigation measures, and cooperation for any demolition or surplus/excess action ensured complete EMS process for each type of action, cooperation among base organizations, and commitment to implementation. The NEPA analysis provided specific analysis for the identified actions (site specific decisions) and, assuming full implementation of the EMS processes with associated mitigation measures and legal compliance, programmatic analysis for future, as yet unidentified actions. If consistent with the EMS process, mitigation measures, and impact analyses, future actions can be categorically excluded using existing AF categorical exclusions. EMS processes are being developed for actions involving radiation. To date, 94 demolition and hundreds of excess/surplus actions have been conducted using the EMS processes.

Internet Site: N/A

Value as a Practice:

▪ ***Results, and Challenges Overcome:***

- 1) The facilitated interdisciplinary planning approach, using the extensive expertise within the pertinent organizations on base, eliminated stovepipe planning and process “disconnects,” which resulted in development of complete, practical, and well-defined EMS processes for demolition actions and excess/surplus actions and mitigation measures, and commitment by all levels in the organizations to implementation and cooperation.
- 2) The facilitated planning approach focused the planning and involvement of appropriate base organizations, eliminated “repeat planning” and multiple NEPA documents, and resulted in closure in less than a year.
- 3) The EMS processes ensure consistent evaluation and integration of pertinent environmental, safety, health, and other legal requirements into demolition and excess/surplus actions, with efficient involvement of

pertinent base organizations for identifying and resolving problems cooperatively.

- 4) Incorporating all the information needed for the Commander to make an informed decision for specific and unidentified future actions, into the environmental assessment provided the Commander with the ability to make an informed decision based on both effectiveness and environmental impacts in one concise "decision package." The EA is therefore both a programmatic document and a site specific document.
 - 5) Incorporating the past history of demolition and excess/surplus actions provided the Realty Office with a complete record of all past actions and a foundation for future actions. It was also used by the team to identify process "disconnects" and resolve environmental, safety and health issues that had occurred in the past.
 - 6) Preparing, reviewing, and correcting the EA by the Interdisciplinary Team concurrently with the progress of the analysis, which focused the analysis, and therefore the document, on the important issues, identified needs for only the specific data and analyses needed, provided a strong foundation for each phase of the analysis, provided for "self-correcting" analyses and documentation, and integrated the disciplines into the analysis effectively.
 - 7) Incorporating the EMS process tables and associated organizational responsibilities and mitigation measures into the FONSI provided a concise "checklist" for the Commander's commitment and all responsible organizations for implementation.
- **Source of information/references:** Please see the attached describing the powerful characteristics of the environmental assessment, and the environmental assessment/FONSI.
 - **Validation:** Cheryl Cordray, 28 CES/CERR, EAFB (see above)
 - **Recommendation as a best practice:** Judith Lee, Facilitator/Planner, Environmental Planning Strategies, Inc. 6340 Dodds Drive, Bettendorf, IA 52722 Phone: 563-332-6870

**Building and Pavement Demolition and Excess/Surplus Actions at
Ellsworth Air Force Base - Programmatic/Site Specific Environmental
Assessment Integrating Environmental Management Systems (EMS) and
NEPA and Programmatic/Site-Specific Planning and Decisionmaking**

Page Number (Section Reference)	Effective Components of the Programmatic/Site-Specific EA, Including the Environmental Management Systems (EMS)
Entire EA	<p>The contractor partnered with the base NEPA Coordinator and Realty Specialists to facilitate base realty, environmental compliance, civil engineering and bioengineering, and planning personnel through the analysis to identify the necessary environmental, safety, health, engineering, and other processes and associated organizational responsibilities for demolition and excess/surplus of military real property. The base had a large number of proposed demolition and excess/surplus actions (10-year plan), and had already completed many such actions. Each action required NEPA compliance, and the actual demolition and excess/surplus efforts were sometimes inefficient, time-consuming, and costly, due to poorly defined process and documentation requirements, and process “disconnects.” The EA integrates an environmental, safety, and health environmental management system (EMS) for demolition of structures and pavement, and another for excess/surplus actions, with associated environmental, safety and health issues, mitigation measures, and impact analyses. Each EMS process identifies in tabular form the consecutive and concurrent process components, legal requirements, and organizational responsibilities for each process component. Process components requiring individual actions (such as compliance with the McKinney Act) and interaction of team members (such as the “walk through” prior to demolition) were collaboratively identified and defined by the base organizations and placed in appropriate sequence. Summaries of each of the legal compliance requirements for NEPA, historic resources, lead-based paint, asbestos, underground storage tanks, and solid and hazardous waste management are included in appendices. The intent was to create a concise but complete decision, training, and implementation package that defined the EMS processes tied to legal requirements, integrated with NEPA. This document could then be used for each demolition or excess/surplus action, without requiring individual NEPA documents, other than categorical exclusions, if the actions were consistent with the processes and impacts evaluated in the EA (Programmatic EA). Additionally, the EA evaluated specific demolition actions and excess/surplus actions already identified, so that individual NEPA documents would not be required (site-specific) for these actions. Involvement of the pertinent base organizations in development of the EMS processes resolved conflicts and existing process “disconnects,” and</p>

	resulted in interorganizational commitments to long-term cooperation and implementation. Each organization saw the benefits of making the EMS processes work. After 4 years, the EMS processes are still being effectively and cooperatively implemented by the responsible base organizations, under the responsibility of the Realty Office, and the EA is being augmented to include actions involving radiation.
2	The responsibilities for each organization are identified by page number, so that organizational leaders can quickly review and be prepared for their organization's responsibilities.
9-11 (Sec. 1.3)	This section defines the scope of the analysis and decisions to be made. It includes the site-specific demolition and excess/surplus actions as well as appropriate use of this document for evaluating future, as yet undefined, actions, using existing AF categorical exclusions and supplements.
13-21 (Sec. 2.1)	The "no action" alternative is described in detail, including potential and proposed historic districts and their status, and the demolition and excess/surplus program on EAFB through 1997 (this EA is the only comprehensive documentation of structures and pavement that had been demolished on EAFB, which provided a check of past actions and a foundations for implementation of the 10-year plan).
21-39 (Sec.2.2.1-2.2.3)	These sections describe the legal requirements for disposal of the various categories of real property; the actual EMS process , with organizational responsibilities, for demolition (concurrent steps are designated alphanumerically); specific facilities designated for demolition through 2007 (the 10-year plan); and issues and mitigation measures for demolition actions. The issues and associated mitigation measures include environmental, safety, health, reporting, site restoration, recycling, and other pertinent measures to be incorporated into implementation of the EMS process . The document is formatted so that everything necessary for a specific demolition action is located in these three sections.
39-50 (Sec. 2.2.4)	This section describes the legal requirements for disposal of excess/surplus land and real property installed equipment (RPIE); the actual EMS process , with organizational responsibilities for disposal (concurrent steps are designated alphanumerically); and specific actions identified for disposal through 2007 (the 10-year plan). No issues or mitigation measures are identified, since these actions are administrative in nature. Again, the document is formatted so that everything necessary for a specific excess/surplus action is located in this section.
55-56 (Ch. 3)	The Affected Environment chapter (Chapter 3) is required by AF policy. In this EA, the baseline information that typically is documented in an encyclopedic manner in Chapter 3 is incorporated analytically instead into the description of the description of the no action alternative and proposed action, and issues (Chapter 2). Encyclopedic information is eliminated and pertinent information incorporated concisely and analytically into the document.

53-61 (Ch. 4)	The environmental consequences of demolition actions (excess/surplus actions are administrative in nature and have no associated environmental effects) are described in a programmatic manner. The EMS processes ensure compliance with all environmental, historical, safety, and other legal requirements. The mitigation measures supplementing the EMS process ensure protection of other resources, such as bats, and efficient implementation of each action.
62-63	Development of the EMS processes involved 17 base specialists and two bat specialists, using the facilitated interdisciplinary approach. This approach ensured commitment to implementation of the final EMS processes and appropriate communication and cooperation among EAFB organizations.
64-end	Summaries of the primary requirements of each environmental, safety, historic resources, and health laws support informed implementation of the EMS processes . The EA is intended to provide all the information needed for both informed decisionmaking and efficient and cooperative implementation for any specific demolition r excess/surplus action, in an easy-to-use format.
FONSI	The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) provides a concise and complete briefing for the Commander's decision, with clear commitment to implementation of the EMS process tables and mitigation measures attached to the FONSI. It also provides an excellent summary of the EMS processes and mitigation measures for EAFB organizations responsible for implementation. The FONSI becomes an easy checklist for all organizations to easily track and implement their responsibilities, and all such actions are clearly committed to by the Commander with his decision.